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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/892,137	06/26/2001	Paul R. Stonikas	BLP 128.1	4376

24628 7590 10/06/2004

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CHICAGO, IL 60606

EXAMINER
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NI, SUHAN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2643

DATE MAILED: 10/06/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>
	09/892,137	STONIKAS ET AL.
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>
	Suhani Ni	2643

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

**A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.**

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 June 2004.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**.                            2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) Claim(s) 21-34 and 104-126 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 118-126 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 21-34 and 104-117 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
 a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:  
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**DETAILED ACTION**

1. This communication is responsive to the amendment dated 06/18/2004.

***Drawings***

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the “**a plurality of ribs formed on an exterior periphery of the skin**” in claim 28 and others must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) The invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) The invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

3. Claims 21-22, 25-30, 32-34, 104-105, 108-113 and 115-117 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Aceti et al. (U. S. Pat. - 5,881,159).

Regarding claims 21-22 and 104-105, Aceti et al. disclose a hearing aid (10), comprising: a deformable skin (14, 16) bounding an internal region (Fig. 2); and at least one spine (12)

extending axially along an interior surface of the skin, which is attached thereto sufficiently so as to provide insertion rigidity when inserted into the user's ear canal as claimed.

Regarding claims 25-27, 32-33, 108-110 and 115-116, Aceti et al. further disclose the hearing aid, wherein a deformable matrix (16) applying expansive forces to the skin.

Regarding claims 28 and 111, Aceti et al. further disclose the hearing aid, wherein a plurality of ribs (15) formed on an exterior periphery of the skin as claimed.

Regarding claims 29-30 and 112-113, Aceti et al. further disclose the hearing aid, wherein an audio output transducer (22) surrounded, at least in part, by a compressible matrix (Figs. 1-2) as claimed.

Regarding claims 34 and 117, Aceti et al. further disclose the hearing aid, wherein a faceplate (26b) attached to the skin.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 23-24, 31, 106-107 and 114 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Aceti et al. (U. S. Pat. - 5,881,159).

Regarding claims 23-24 and 106-107, Aceti et al. do not clearly teach the hearing aid further including a sound conducive tube as claimed. Since providing a sound tube for a hearing aid is very well known in the art, it therefore would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at

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the time the invention was made to provide a suitable sound tube for the hearing aid, in order to desirably deliver acoustic output to the user.

Regarding claims 31 and 114, Aceti et al. do not clearly teach the matrix comprises at least one of open cell foam, closed cell foam, and a fabric as claimed. Since providing a desirable otoplastic material for the hearing aid housing is very well known in the art, it therefore would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to provide a suitable otoplastic material, such as at least one of an open cell foam, a closed cell foam, and a fabric for the hearing aid, in order to provide more comfort to users.

***Response to Amendment***

5. Regarding the newly submitted claims 118-126 directed to an invention that is independent or distinct from the invention originally claimed, which contains newly introduced limitations, such as “at least **one electrical component ...**” with all the limitations added, which clearly are not from the elected invention originally claimed (claims **21-34** and **104-117**).

Since applicants have received an action on the merits for the originally presented invention, this invention has been constructively elected by original presentation for prosecution on the merits. Accordingly, claims **118-126** are not original presented and elected and are withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. See 37 CFR 1.142(b) and MPEP § 821.03.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

6. Applicant’s arguments dated 06/18/2004 have been fully considered, but they are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

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***Conclusion***

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Suhan Ni** whose telephone number is **(703)-308-9322**, and the number for fax machine is **(703)-305-9508**. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am to 7:30 pm. If it is necessary, the examiner's supervisor, **Curtis Kuntz**, can be reached at **(703) 305-4708**.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the group receptionist whose telephone number is **(703) 305-3900**.

SN

October 2, 2004



**SUHAN NI**  
PRIMARY EXAMINER